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Letters to the Editor

Circulation of Incorrectly Labeled Adenovirus 50 and 51 Prototype Preparations

In 1999, the discovery of two previously undescribed serotypes of adenovirus was published, one belonging to species B1 and called adenovirus 50 (Ad50), and the other belonging to species D and called adenovirus 51 (Ad51) (1, 2). In August 2000, due to a laboratory mistake, preparations of the new prototypes carrying the wrong label were sent from our institute to the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) in Manassas, Va., and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, Ga. Ad50 was labeled Ad51 and vice versa. After the discovery of the mistake at the CDC in September 2000, we informed the ATCC of the switch of labels, before this institute had released the viruses. At the same time, the materials were labeled correctly in our institute.

Earlier, however, some material had already been distributed with the wrong label attached. Despite attempts to inform the recipients concerned, papers have recently appeared reporting results of DNA sequence analyses which indicated that the Ad50-labeled virus preparations used by the authors belonged to species D and the Ad51-labeled virus preparations to species B (3, 4). In consequence of these papers, we reexamined all our stocks of Ad50 and Ad51 also by DNA sequence analysis and found the present labels correct. Still, by this communication we want to inform other adenovirus investigators about the possibility that they have received mislabeled preparations of Ad50 and Ad51, either from our institute before September 2000 or from third parties at any time. If required, we will provide them and other interested researchers with Ad50 and Ad51 virus prototypes from our stocks. Presently, the ATCC does not offer this service.

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